



# North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

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Established 2003

## Meeting Minutes – North Carolina Food Safety and Defense Task Force

Wednesday January 8, 2020  
NCDCA Argonomics Conference Room  
4300 Reedy Creed Rd  
Raleigh, NC 27699

- I. **Welcome & Introductions** –Veronica Bryant  
Requested suggestions for keeping membership list up to date.
  
  - II. **Agenda:**
    - A. Review of minutes from July task force meeting.
      - a. One correction made to a member’s last name then meeting minutes were accepted.
    - B. Foodborne Illness Outbreak Update – DPH/NCDHHS
      - a. Salmonella outbreak associated with Nash Co restaurant was investigated during the end of 2019. The multi-agency response reinforced the value of the Task Force as active response partners included NC Dept of Agriculture’s Rapid Response Team (RRT), NC State Lab of Public Health, local communicable disease and environmental health, and state communicable disease and environmental health.
      - b. An increase in STEC cases among NC residents from multiple counties was identified by several local health departments and hospitals during November 2019. Advanced lab techniques (i.e. whole genome sequencing) genetically linked NC cases to cases in other states. CDC is now leading the investigation and working with FDA on possible traceback. Lettuce has been a commonality among cases.
      - c. A holiday party at a fire station catered by an unlicensed caterer resulted in rapid illness among exposed. Leftover food was frozen over the holidays and was shipped to CDC on Jan 2, 2020.
  
  - III. **Business:**
    - A. Committee reports:
      - Executive Committee – **Veronica Bryant**
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- i. The required report from the Task Force to the governor's office is on its way to the governor's office and will be posted to the task force website when finalized.
  - ii. We'd like to have more representation from locals on the Executive Committee. Meetings are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of even number months.
  - iii. The Task Force co-sponsored a norovirus tabletop for Buncombe County that took place in December. Sampling and aseptic techniques were practiced. Brian Byrd gave an epi presentation and Veronica gave an EH presentation. Two boxes of environmental swabs are leftover and available for use.
  - iv. Inquiries about this meeting being held virtually have been received. Previous emergency management (EM) contacts are no longer available so we need additional contacts. EM has historically provided a meeting space. Valerie Lott volunteered to check into a location in the previous EM space (e.g. Media Room) and adding an EM contact. The executive order states that we will have EM representation.
- **FERC – Food Emergency Response and Communication sub-committee– Sean Silva/ Daniel Gains, NC Dept. of Ag**
  - i. Few recalls in last few months
  - ii. Hard boiled eggs (Listeria) – recall effectiveness checks ongoing. Three major distributors and 5-6 major grocery store chains involved. Want to ensure small mom and pop stores are aware.
  - iii. Recalls have been quiet for meat and poultry
  - iv. Veronica sent a notification for the egg recall because some of the product was bulk distributed to institutions.
- **Crop/Produce – Chris Harris**
  - i. Mobile Unit for Disinfection training occurring in Savannah that can be used at farms.
  - ii. Six produce alliance trainings scheduled throughout the state. Registration is open.
  - iii. Preparing to attend and participate in the winter vegetable growers meeting in Feb.
  - iv. NC STATE continues to set up GAPS workshops. Various research stations are putting in pack lines for educational purposes. Working with national partners.
  - v. On farm readiness reviews continue. Many have been completed. Large farm inspections are being done and small farm inspections start this year.

vi. Nicole Clawson - Agricultural water rule standards are being worked on.

- Dairy Committee/ Egg & Poultry Committee – **NC DA & CS**
  - i. Daniel Gaines will talk to Dr Yongue to determine if this committee is still needed.
  - ii. Bordon has filed for bankruptcy protection. The largest dairy producer filed back in November 2019. US dairy industry taking some hits due to competition from non-lactating animals and other reasons.
- Conference Planning Committee- **Steve Tracey**
  - i. The spring conference will be at the Double Tree Hotel at Research Triangle Park because we were outgrowing our previous space.
  - ii. Sponsorship letters have been sent
  - iii. We will have a joint meeting with the Carolinas Affiliate for Food Protection. This will result in a working lunch/business meeting. There is no additional burden to the Task Force to do this.
  - iv. Conference Topic: Innovative food and the impact to the industry and food safety. Speakers have not been confirmed but have been invited. Other topics: plant-based protein meat, lab grown meat (Kannapolis), virtual and augmented reality inspection work for training, microgreen presentation
  - v. Eventbrite will be used this year to allow for online registration and payment. The fees will increase because of this resource.
  - vi. May 12 – 13, 2020 are the dates of the conference.
- Task Force Education and Exercise Committee – **Candice Christian**
  - i. March – awaiting virtual training speaker; July is open for suggested speakers.

B. Other reports:

- Academic Reports
  - i. NC STATE – Safe Place Info Center (safeplacefsic) – a social media outreach to consumers to break down larger food safety concepts. 2019 – over 350,000 people reached. 2020 goal – address factors that affect the growth of microbes to consumers month by month. Currently addressing risk factors for foodborne illness. They will have more expert interviews being posted.
- Industry Reports

- Agency Reports
    - i. Shane Smith – EH – New field services supervisor filled, Terri Ritter. Two positions still open. Oyster Shell Reuse law passed last year and guidance and signage have been created and available in the Correspondence Section of website. Adopting 97 rules is being done over the next 4 years in four 18-month phases. Annex came out and is being incorporated into these rules. Food code has to be adopted. They have 4 months to write their rules. They're getting ready for the RNC. Workgroups for adoption are open for additional participants.
    - ii. Daniel Gaines NCDHHS Food and Drug – getting ready for audit in February.
    - iii. Beth Yongue will be retired by the next full task force meeting.
    - iv. Valerie Lott – Public HP&R – working on subcommittees for RNC
    - v. Susan – NC DPI School Nutrition Division – annual HACCP plan templates are updated to make things easier for the schools. They try to adopt what's coming to help people transition before it becomes official. They want to ensure what they have is compliant with the upcoming changes Shane referenced. They need help knowing what they should consider changing. They would like to have it ready by May because the schools like to print bulk items over the summer. She is requesting assistance with ensuring their documents are appropriate. Recall notices are sent to schools. Please notify her of products you believe that may affect schools. She's interested in the difference between alerts and recalls.
  - Recall
    - i. Mandatory
    - ii. Voluntary
    - iii. Market withdrawals – removed by the company voluntarily. Not b/c they found the pathogen but because they are being precautionary.
  - Michelle Howard
    - i. Eggs started as an alert. Then ALMARK decided to do a voluntary recall. Then they recalled all their product.
    - ii. You can sign up to have notifications when there is an FDA recall
    - iii. There is a new FDA commissioner
  - Nicole Clawson
    - i. Produce safety standards communication released on Monday
    - ii. Outbreaks emphasizing the importance of implementing produce safety standards is being worked on.
  - Veronica

- i. A lot of CDC produce is an “alert” because they have so many broad factors that there is no particular common source to implicate
- Shane – rules are moved to public comment period for people’s feedback. Rule making usually takes 18 to 24 months. Current deadline is April for Public Health Commission presentation.
  - i. Every food establishment will have a written plan to cleanup vomiting/diarrhea events with the 2017 FDA Code adoption. As part of RNC preparation a vomit/diarrhea cleanup handout was developed. Once finalized it will be distributed.
- Michelle – Google “vomiting Larry” and that’s why norovirus is now in the rule.

***10:30am-10:50am –Break & networking***

**10:50am – 11:55am**

IV. Speaker – FBI – Kevin Spradlin discussed “Food Defense Threat Overview”  
kspradlin@fbi.gov

**VI. Adjournment**